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A

S E R M O N

Preach'd in

CHRIST-Church, **DUBLIN**,

On *Wednesday* the 5th. of **NOVEMBER**, 1735.

Being the ANNIVERSARY of the

Gun-Powder-Plot,

Before His GRACE

LIONEL Duke of **DORSET**,
Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of
IRELAND;

And the Lords *Spiritual* and *Temporal* in Parliament
assembled.

Carey
By M. Lord Bishop of **CLONFERT**.

Published by His GRACE's Special Command, and by Order of
the House of **LORDS**.

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Die Veneris 7^o Die Novembris, 1735.

IT is Ordered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House shall be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of CLONFERT, for his Sermon preached before this House the 5th Inst. at Christ-Church; and his Lordship is hereby desired to Print and Publish the same. And that no Person presume to Print the said Sermon, but such as his Lordship shall appoint.

En. Sterne, Cler^y Parliamentor.

By Virtue of the foregoing Order, I do appoint J. LEATHLEY to Print this Sermon, and do forbid any other Person to Print the same.

M. CLONFERT.



A
S E R M O N.

Preach'd in
Christ-Church, DUBLIN, &c.

Matth. vii. 15, 16.

Beware of false Prophets, who come to you in Sheep's Clothing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves. Ye shall know them by their Fruits: Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles.

IN these Words our Blessed Lord gives a Caution against false Prophets, with a black Character indeed of them, and a Mark whereby to know 'em: The Caution in the first Words, *Beware of false Prophets*: The Character in the next, *who come to you in Sheep's Clothing, but inwardly they are ravening Wolves*; and lastly the Mark, whereby to know them, *their Fruits*. This Caution, Character, and Mark, together with the Application of them to our present Purpose,

Purpose, shall be the several Points of my Discourse, and if you please, of your Attention.

First, for the Caution against false Prophets. By Prophet the Scriptures mean a Man, who either denounceth God's future Judgments against Sin, or declares his Promises of Rewards to Virtue. So *Noah*, that he might check the Flood of Vice, that was overspreading the Earth, foretold a Flood of Waters, that should, and did overspread it. So *Jonah* declared the Judgments of Heaven against *Nineveh* for its Sins, tho' the *Ninevites* being so wise as to believe the Declaration, escap'd the Judgments. So *Moses* on the other Hand, that he may keep the *Israelites*, steady to the Worship of the true God, gives them Promise of a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, and in due time or in the Fullness of Days, of a greater Prophet and Saviour than himself. The same, if Time permitted, might be shewn of *Isaiab* and of all the Prophets, whose Books we read in the Old Testament: I mean that the *End* of their prophecying was to promote Virtue and check Sin, or to maintain true Religion in the Hearts of Men. In after Times, such Men as pursued the same *End*, tho' not altogether by the same *Means*, that is to say, such Men as preached true Religion tho' they did not foretel future Events, yet were said to *prophecy*, and were styl'd *Prophets*. So of St. *John* Baptist our Lord's Forerunner, it is said, *Luke* i, 76. *And thou Child shalt be called the Prophet of the highest*

est : For thou shalt go before the Face of the Lord to prepare his Ways ; To give Knowledge of Salvation unto his People, for the Remission of their Sins. Here we see, that to give Knowledge of Salvation to God's People is to *prophecy*, and because St. *John* is to do so, therefore he is to be a *Prophet*. So in St. *Paul's* Sense to *prophecy* is to speak to Edification, Exhortation, and Comfort, that is to instruct Men in Religion, to stir them up to its Practice, and to encourage them under its Difficulties. So *Noah* who is sometimes called a *Prophet*, is at other Times called a *Preacher* of Righteousness: So *Jonah's* *prophecying* as it is called in the style of the Old Testament, is *Jonah's* *preaching* in the style of the New : So St. *Peter* mentions false *Teachers* under the Gospel, as answering to false *Prophets* under the Law. From all these Instances it appears that our Saviour in the Text, when he bids us beware of false *Prophets*, means to bid us beware of false Teachers or Teachers of false Religion. And what is that? What is true Religion? What is false? Look, how far the East is from the West: Look how high the Heaven of Heavens is above this Earth: So far is true Religion removed from false. True Religion is the Appointment of God, who is infinite in Wisdom, infinite in Goodness; of God the Father of Truth, who is not a Man that he should lye, or the Son of Man that he should deceive. Accordingly true Religion carries in her Face conspicuously

those lovely Features of Wisdom, Goodness and Truth, which prove her to be of divine Descent: All other Religion is from Man, and must and doth, like its Author, abound with Defects which bewray its base original. Hence according to the various Tempers or Designs of the Inventors we find that great Variety in the Superstitions of the World. Here Tyranny and Oppression and Violence; there enthusiastic melancholy and Stupidity, voluntary Macerations, voluntary Tortures; here Stocks and Stones, here Leeks and Onions, here Dogs and Bulls, Rats and Serpents inshrined in Temples, and worshipt with strict Devotion. Nay we find, though well one might have hoped, that there could not be found in any Part of the World Deities of more contemptible Degree than what I have just mentioned, yet we do find even in the politest Part of it, even in antient Rome, that renowned Seat of Empire, of Learning, of Civility, even there we find such Deities, as cannot be named in civil Company, much less in a religious Congregation, but he that should name them must incur the Censure of Filthiness and Brutality. So that St. Paul in his Account of *Gentile* Superstitions rather extenuates than aggravates the Matter, when he says *they changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds and fourfooted Beasts and creeping Things*. And indeed as often I take a survey of Mankind under this wretched Variety of Delusion, I cannot help thinking of a great Company of Lunatics, in their several Cells

Cells, some moap'd with Melancholy, others raving with Phrensy, some imploying themselves very seriously in the Actions of Children, others groveling in filth like Beasts ; all choquing Proofs of the lamentable Weakness of human Reason. And can such Effects as these be charged to true Religion ? No, No ; they cannot.----Let God be justified, and Man be found, the Liar, as he is, in all these superstitious Impositions For what is true Religion, but to behave as becometh a Member of rational Society under God the Governor of the whole ? or in other Words, to behave with filial Duty towards God, and with brotherly Benevolence towards one another ? or as the same Sense is still better worded by the Prophet, who had it from God himself, *what has God required of thee O Man, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ?* Sure Things so different in their Beginings as are true and false Religion, the one derived from God, the other from Man ; of such different Tendency in their after Progress, the one to rational Devotion and solid Virtue, the other to trifle and Folly and Madnels, must conduct each its Votaries to very different Ends. And so most assuredly those Votaries will find it. They of true Religion will find themselves at last conducted to Life and Immortality, to the Society of blessed Spirits made perfect, to the Presence of God at whose Right Hand is Fullness of Joy to all Eternity. They of false Religion wil find indeed the

the Justice of the same God; but they will feel the most dreadful Effects of it.

And now that we are informed what is to be understood by false Prophets, it is easily seen whether we ought to beware of them or no. Would we beware of a Physician who instead of Medicines prescribed Poisons? Would we beware of a Guide, who instead of conducting Men safe over a dangerous Precipice, known to thrust them Headlong and destroy them? Why then much more ought we to beware of a false Prophet, who instead of the Bread of Life gives a Stone; who gives, instead of Fish, a Scorpion; instead of Nourishment, Death. For so doth the false Prophet abuse Men. Every Christian, I mean, who is so indeed, and not in Name alone, must be earnestly concerned to know on what Terms his Soul is to be saved or lost, what Rules of Life it has pleased God to set him, what Articles of Faith are prescribed to him, in a Word he must be concerned to know what is true Religion. To know this and put his Knowledge in Practice is the Christian's his only grand Concern. In this most important of all Affairs the false Prophet cheats his Disciple, either undesignedly, knowing no better himself, and then he is what the Scripture calls a blind Guide, in which Case both the Leader and Follower must fall into the Ditch; or else he cheats him knowingly and designedly, and then he is what the Scripture calls a Deceiver, a Character so

so detestable to God and Man, that I wish most sincerely there were no Man living, who could deserve it. The blind Guide doth irreparable Damage to as many as are blind enough to follow him; but after all he has something to say for himself, "That he knew no better; that he intended no Harm, tho' he has done a great deal." But the Deceiver, what can he say in his Defence? He did know better. He did know that God required many Things, which he concealed from his Disciples; and that many Things he imposed on them, which God did not require. He knows he has trampled God's Commandments under Foot, in order to set up his own Traditions; he knows he has wilfully perverted the Word of God by his false Interpretations; and Souls, which Christ dyed to save, doth he know, he has ruin'd! Ruin'd them, and for what? for a little dirty Gain, or a little empty Honour! O horrid, horrid, wanton Wickedness! To forge Laws, as if ordained by God; to stifle Laws, which really were ordained by him; to *slay* in this Manner *the Souls that should not dye*, for trifling Views, *for handfuls of Barley*, as the Prophet wordeth it, *and for pieces of Bread!* And will not the God of Mercy, God the Lover of Souls, will he not be avenged for such Impiety as this? Most assuredly he will; He has denounced his Indignation against the *prophane Prophet and Priest*, whose Wickedness he has found in his own House; who commit Folly; who prophesy,

phcey, and cause his people to err; in whom he sees an horrible Thing; who commit Adultery, that is to say, leave him and true Religion, to follow Idolatry and Superstition; who walk in lies; from whom Prophane-ness goeth forth into all the Land; who strengthen the Hands of evil Doers, that none doth return from his Wickedness; who make his people vain, that is, given to senseless Fopperies in Religion; who speak a Vision out of their own Heart, and not out of the Mouth of God; Prophets, who run when he has not sent them; who prophecy what he has not spoken to them; who still say to them, that despise him, "Ye shall have Peace; who say to every one that walketh after the Imagination of his own Heart, and not after the Ordinance of God, who say to such, "No Evil shall come upon you. Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts concerning these Prophets, "Behold I will feed them with Wormwood, "and make them drink the Water of Gall. Behold "a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in Fury, even "a grievous whirlwind; it shall fall grievously upon "the Head of those wicked Men. Jerem. xxiii. 14,---23. And if this Threat tho' expressed with Vehemence, must however be understood only of a temporal Punishment: Yet that of St. John must certainly be understood of Punishment eternal: The Devil that deceived the Nations and the Beast, and the false Prophet, shall be cast into the lake of Fire and Brimstone, to be tormented Day and Night, for ever and ever.
Apoc.

Apoc. xx, 10. And hither let those follow them; who can like such Company, *as the Devil, and the Beast and the false Prophet:* and such Entertainment, *as everlasting Flames:* We for our Part will say every one to his own Soul, *O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret: unto their Assembly, mine Honour, be not thou united.*

And so doubtless would every Man living say to all false Prophets, if he did but know them to be such: But there's the Difficulty, to know the true from the false Prophet. For they both approach you under the same Colours; they Both accost you with the same fair Speeches, about God and Religion and Concern for the good of your Souls; *the false Prophets come to you in Sheep's Clothing, tho' inwardly they are ravening Wolves,* which is the *second* Point I am to speak to.

Were there no other Reason, but what I have been mentioning under the first Head, yet that alone would be enough to make any Man beware of false Prophets; I mean that they ruin the Soul: But in the Character given of them, by our blessed Lord, of being Wolves in Sheep's Clothing, there are still other Reasons, which to a Man of any Sense and Spirit must make them most abominable. Hypocrisy and Lying, Greediness and Cruelty make up the lovely Composition. The false Prophet, tho' a Man of no Religion himself, yet seeing the World in general disposed to
it

it, may put on the Garb and Guise of it; may talk of Devotion, Abstinence and Prayer; may be first in Church and last out of it; and all the while he is, there, to make himself remarkable, the *Judas* may set his Face into all the soft, the languishing Contrition of a *Magdalene* in Picture. He may crumble the Duties of Religion into numberless petty Points of no Consequence to true Virtue and Morality; he may raise and improve needless Scruples in weak Minds; invent fabulous Doctrines merely to terrify sick and dying Persons, in order to gain extravagant Bequests from them; and all this Part, with a little Practice, he may be able to act with a very plausible Appearance of Zeal and Piety. I say with a very plausible Appearance: For the true Prophet or the worthy Minister of God, is in Duty bound to do some Things the same, and some so little different in Appearance, that they are hardly to be distinguished the one from the other. The true Prophet, or the worthy Minister of God, must be exemplary in common Life; exemplary in Devotion publick and domestick; he must be careful not to neglect any religious Duty himself, and as careful to prevent, as far as in him lies, the neglect of it in others; he must lend a willing and a patient Ear to the Scruples of tender Consciences, and administer all the Ease and Comfort he can to them; must attend the Beds of sick and dying Persons, and endeavour to dispose them to Acts of Justice and Charity, before they die.

die. These Things the good and true Minister of God must and will do: But he will never instil or improve groundless Scruples; will never endeavour to make the Lives, and Deaths too of his Disciples, uneasy with false Terrors, with wrong Notions about God and another World; will scorn to enrich himself or his Fraternity by the Ruin or the Wrong of the dying Persons family, under Pretence of pious Uses. But yet the Duties of the true Prophet and the Practice of the false shall so much resemble one another, as not to be distinguished but by the Principles they proceed from, and the Ends they tend to. The Principle in one is real Religion and Conscience; in the other, Hypocrisy and Deceit; the End propos'd by the one, is the Glory of God and the good of Souls; by the other, Self-Interest and Gain. But how shall they be known asunder, these Principles and these Ends? To God indeed the Discerner of Hearts, they are naked and open; but to Men, who must judge by Appearances, they are very hardly discerned, till they come at last, as our Lord says, they will do, to discover themselves by their Fruits. By their Fruits you shall know them, as plainly and as easily, as you may a Thorn from a Vine, or a Thistle from a Fig-Tree: which is, our *third* and last Point to consider.

Religion, we all know, is a Thing of Practice. Religion, all and every part of it, tends to Practice. That Religion, which produceth no Prac-
D tice,

tice, is no better than nothing. That Religion, which produceth evil Practice, God knows and Man too, is a great deal worse than nothing. The Day that found me at this part of my Discourse, when many, who are now here present, were abroad to see our Troops, passing in Review before their General, did, by the frequent full Volleys echoing into Town, hint to me a Comparifon, which, I thought, might well illustrate this whole point. Suppose then the Soldier now duly inlisted, diligently trained, regularly exercifed; and to fhew that he has been fo, fuppofe him answering every Word of Command, on the Ground of Review, with proper, eafy and ready Motions of his Body, and of the Arms he handleth. This to us his Friends is a Sight very agreeable: This is what we readily consent to call a fine Appearance: But ftill, to fpeak the Truth, it is Appearance only; only the Theory of War. The Proof is wanting yet, of his being, what we wifh and hope he is, a good Soldier. And what Proof is that? Why, 'tis Action. If he desert for fear of Action, if he flinch in the time of Action; what availeth his being a perfect Master of the Theory in all its parts? What availeth the fine appearance, he hath made? What availeth it, that he hath given his Friends fuch promifing hopes of him? He muft not after all pretend to wear the honourable Character of a good Soldier. So the *Chriftian*, who by our Church itfelf is deem'd to be no other than a
Soldier

Soldier, enlisted under *Christ's* Banner by the Sacrament of Baptism, and it was this Authority indeed that made me bold to hope I might find Favour if I used the same Comparison---the Christian, then, I say, may be duly initiated, carefully instructed, regularly exercised; well seen in all performances of publick Worship: And very good and right and proper all this is. But still this is only the Theory of Religion, only his training, his Exercises, to prepare and fit him for Action. Action alone is what must determine his Character at last. And what Action? Why common Life, common Morality, common honesty, common humanity. Here is the Field of Action for the Christian, to shew himself, what he is. Doth he fail here? doth he flinch here? is he not a loyal Subject? is he not a faithful Husband? is he not a tender Father? is he not a gentle Master? is he not a true Friend? is he not an honest Man? Why then he is not a good Christian. But what, if instead of being bad under good Discipline, his very Discipline teach him to be bad? What if that teach him to violate all the common (but no less sacred for being common) Duties of Life? what must we say, then? why, then he's no other than a Soldier trained to ravage, murder and destroy his peaceful inoffensive Neighbours. No need of farther Disputation about his Church, whether it be a true or a false one, our Lord has pronounced that by her Fruits we may know such a Church to be a false Church.

Church; her Prophets to be false Prophets; and her People a wretched, deluded, wicked People; wicked upon principle of Religion, the most mischievous, most sanguinary, most remorseless of all Wickedness.

And is there such a Church on Earth? There is: I mean the Church of *Rome*; she is not ashamed to authorise the most ungenerous, the most unchristian Practices, if so she may support her favourite Doctrines. And what Doctrines? If we look into that crazy Foundation of all her false Tenets, her boasted Infallibility, whether personally in the *Pope*, or collectively in the Body of a Council, or jointly in *Pope* and Council: is it not less absurd, infinitely less, to suppose a meer Brute Animal capable of composing the whole Body of the *Roman* Laws, or explaining the System of the World by the Laws of Gravitation, than that any one Man, or any assembly of Men, however grave and good, should equal God in his incommunicable Attribute of unerring Wisdom?

Again: *you have heard that it was said not only by those of old time, but even by our Lord himself when he instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, "drink ye all of this Wine, as well as eat ye all of this Bread.* But that Church permits indeed all to eat the one, but none to drink the other, save only the Clergy: except that the King of *France*, on his Coronation Day, has been formerly allowed to drink the Wine as well as eat the

Bread; I suppose the Meaning was, that so great a Monarch, in Consideration of the very high Merits of some of his Royal Predecessors toward the See of *Rome*, might once in all his Life, upon so very solemn an Occasion, to recommend him to the Reverence of his new Subjects by so august a Distinction, be put upon an equal Foot of Dignity, with the meanest Curate in his Kingdom: Intolerable Insolence!

Again ye have heard that it was said by God himself from Mount *Sinai*, *Thou shalt not worship any graven Image*: But that Church, in flat Contradiction to this Command, says, "*Thou shalt worship a Block of Wood or Stone*, chizell'd into the Shape of a venerable old Man, to represent God the Father; or into a more juvenile Shape, to represent God the Son; or into the Shape of a Pigeon, to represent God the Holy Ghost; or into the Shape of a fair Maiden, to represent the Virgin Mary; or into sundry other Shapes, to represent sundry dead Men and Women; who some of them, in their Life Time, it is likely have been good; and some as likely have been bad; but whether good or bad, their Fees of Honour have been duly paid at the Court of *Rome*, their Patents pass'd in all the Forms, they are *canonized* and shall be worshipt.

Once more and I have done with her Doctrines: what more shameless Insult upon all the Sense and Reason of Mankind, than that grossest of all her Doc-

trines, Transubstantiation, grounded on a foolish Obstinacy to understand our Saviour's Words in a literal Sense upon one Occasion, when upon all other the like Occasions that Church herself agreeth with common Reason, to understand his Words in a figurative Sense? Hence it happens, that her People are obliged to believe, that a thin Wafer, after the Words of Consecration pronounced, is instantly turned into a living human Body, with Head and Legs and Arms in all their full Proportions, and weighing therefore we *must* suppose about two hundred Pounds; that this Body which *Joseph of Arimathea*, we may be sure, could not take down from the Cross, and convey to the Sepulcher, without the Assistance of one or two able Men, at least, I say, that this very Body is betwixt the Priest's Finger and Thumb conveyed within the Lips of the Receiver, chewed and swallowed almost imperceptibly. This her People must believe, or undergo the wholesome Severities of the Inquisition or her other unmerciful Tribunals.

For these and the like gross but gainful Doctrines, has she raised innumerable Tumults, innumerable Wars and Rebellions in most Parts of *Europe*; for these has she employed the Gallies of *France*, the Inquisition of *Spain*, of *Portugal*, of *Italy*; for these has she contrived, attempted, compassed the Death of great and good Princes; for these has she massacred at once whole Multitudes of innocent

cent harmless People; many hath she tortured; many burnt to Death; and some in their full Health and Strength, has she buried alive. For these Doctrines in the wretched Reign of our Queen *Mary* the 1st. there were publickly executed, besides those murdered secretly in Prisons, there were publickly executed in *England*, no less than four hundred Persons; twenty of them, Bishops or eminent Clergy; three-score Women; Children more than forty; some Women big with Child; one of these bore a Child in the midst of the Fire, and the new-born Infant, when possibly it might have been saved, was barbarously thrown back into the Flames and burned. For these same Doctrines was the intended bloody Massacre, which assembleth us here this Day, by which our King *James* the 1st. the Queen, the Prince, and all the Royal Branches, with the Nobility, Clergy and Commons of *England*, then in Parliament assembled, were to have been destroyed at once, in the twinkling of an Eye, by a Mine of Gun-powder. *O Wickedness indeed beyond the Examples of all former Ages! O Wickedness beyond even the Examples of that Church herself! And is this, O blessed Jesu! Is this thy Church? This thy only Church on Earth? Her Martyrs as she stiles them, who suffered for this Attempt, were they thy Martyrs? This Cause of theirs was it thy Cause? Wast thou, when they assembled Day after Day, Night after Night to contrive this*
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horrible Design, wast Thou *present in the Midst of them*? Was it by thy *Spirit* they were prompted to renounce all Allegiance to their King, all Regard to solemn Oaths, all Reverence for publick Laws, all Affection for their native Country; all the strictest ties of private Friendship, of Affinity, of Blood, all Humanity, all Bowels, all Remorse? to sacrifice all these Regards, to hazard their own Lives, to plunge a whole flourishing Kingdom into Blood and Confusion, and all this with no other View but of restoring the Interests of the Church of *Rome*? Hast thou then indeed ordained, that Dungeons, Tortures, and all the most violent Deaths shall be the Lot of those who have not their *Foreheads sealed with her Mark*? Dost thou consecrate the Daggers which she consecrates, for Murders? And dost thou bless the Assassins Hand, which she blesteth, to sheath those Daggers in the Hearts of Princes? Forbid it, Heaven! Ye Inhabitants of the Earth, believe it not! Ye Protestants of these Realms, abhor the Thought: And bless ye the Name of God in all your succeeding Generations, on this doubly sacred Day, for that you have twice escaped out of her Hands, like *Fire-brands snatched out of the Fire*: Once, by the Providential Discovery of the Popish Powder-Plot, just as it was ripe for Execution: again, by the victorious Arms of our renowned King WILLIAM the III^d. whose Memory, for having so heroically rescued our Religion and Liberty

berty, when they were at the very Brink of Ruin; and
 for having so effectually secured them, by establishing
 our present Royal Family upon the Throne, must be
 to all true Lovers of our Country for ever dear, for
 ever pretious, for ever glorious: Bless, I say again and
 again, ye Protestants of these Realms, bless the Name
 of God, for these his wonderful Deliverances. Tell
 your Children, that they may tell theirs again, what
 great Things God has done for us. Teach them early
 to beware of that false Church and of her *false Prophets*,
those Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing, who ever have been
 in all Time past, and ever will be in all Time to
 come, eager to devour us. Particularly we, my Bre-
 thren of the Clergy, let us watch over our Flocks as
 good Shepherds ought to do: That *of the Few, which*
God has given us, we lose none: Let us beware of
 that severe Reproach from God by his Prophet Eze-
 kiel, "*Wo be to the Shepherds of Israel, that do feed*
themselves: Should not the Shepherds feed the
Flocks? Ye eat the Fat, and ye cloth you with the
Wool, but ye feed not the Flock. The diseased have
ye not strengthned, neither have ye healed that
which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which
was broken, neither have ye brought again that
which was driven away, neither have ye sought that
which was lost; but with Force and with Cruelty
have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, be-
 F cause

" *cause there is no Shepherd: And they became Meat*
 " *to all the Beasts of the Field when they were scat-*
 " *tered.*

Lastly, thee, O God, we beseech *to bring into the*
Way of Truth, such as have erred and are deceived:
To strengthen such as do stand, to comfort and help the
weak hearted, to raise up them that fall, and finally
to beat down Satan under our Feet.

ERRATUM.

Page 8 before *known* read *was*.

FINIS.

